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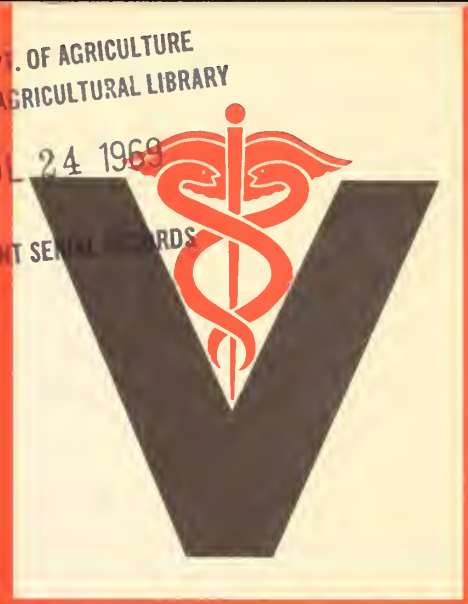

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES FOR VETERINARIANS IN THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

MISCELLANEOUS PUBLICATION NO. 1018

296192

In this pamphlet you will find—

- *A brief description of the various U.S. Department of Agriculture activities in which DVM's are employed as veterinary medical officers.*
- *Information about the career opportunities and challenges in veterinary medicine that exist within the organization, and about the advantages of employment in the Federal civil service.*

Veterinary medical officers in the Department of Agriculture have an excellent opportunity to build successful, rewarding careers. In considering the advantages of Government service, do not overlook the satisfaction to be derived from the knowledge that your work would contribute to the welfare of the entire Nation. Appointments are based on qualifications without regard to race, sex, creed, color, or national origin.

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Washington, D.C. Revised July 1969

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES FOR VETERINARIANS IN THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

The Department of Agriculture has a wide range of activities concerned with research and regulatory and control programs affecting animals. These activities are conducted by two agencies of the Department: Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and Consumer and Marketing Service (C&MS). ARS administers programs in animal disease and parasite research, animal health, and veterinary biologics. C&MS conducts the meat and poultry inspection activities. These agencies have headquarters in Washington, D.C., Beltsville and Hyattsville, Md.

There are approximately 2,500 veterinarians in the Department of Agriculture. They comprise one of the largest single groups of professional employees in the Department. They are stationed at laboratories, field stations, and in packing and processing

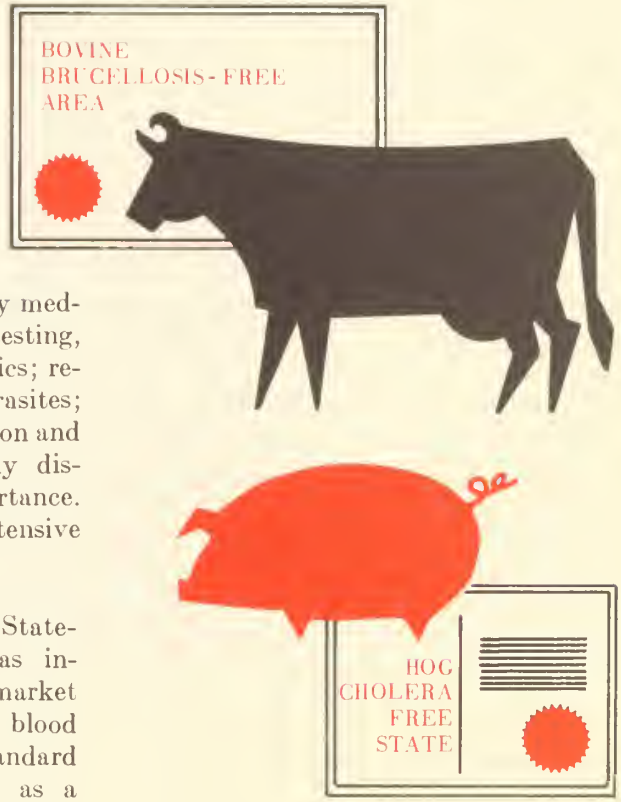
plants at more than 1,000 locations throughout the United States.

Persons trained in veterinary medicine find excellent opportunities for successful careers under the civil service merit system in the Department of Agriculture. In this organization you will find progressive policies, sound personnel practices, and a continuing interest in you as an individual. You will derive great personal satisfaction in doing important work that is beneficial to the general public. You will have many opportunities to make full use of your knowledge, innate ability, and professional talents and to contribute new accomplishments in your chosen field.

By guarding the health of livestock, veterinarians guard the health of consumers. Those in private practice do an effective job of keeping pace with new problems in animal disease. But those in public service have an added responsibility: To solve research problems and develop control techniques that require the efforts of many people, often in different places. Also, they are responsible for the solution of problems that fall naturally into the public domain and others that must, by law, be handled by public authorities.

Progressive-minded men who show initiative, effectiveness, and capacity for leadership can be assured of advancement. We are seeking young veterinarians with these qualities and we make every effort to assign them to geographical areas of their preference.

ACHIEVEMENTS, GOALS, AND TARGETS



Veterinary Medical Officers in the service of the Department of Agriculture receive worldwide recognition for their past accomplishments and their current programs. Cooperative State-Federal forces have successfully eradicated such serious diseases as bovine pleuropneumonia, foot-and-mouth disease, vesicular exanthena, cattle tick fever, screwworm, and fowl plague. The discovery by Government scientists that Texas fever is caused by a blood parasite spread by a cattle tick was of major medical significance. This knowledge—that an intermediate host could spread an infectious disease from one animal to another—was a key to the conquest of malaria, yellow fever, typhus, and other insect-borne human and animal disease.

Current activities of veterinary medical officers involve licensing, testing, and inspecting veterinary biologics; research in animal diseases and parasites; and prevention, control, eradication and epidemiological studies of many diseases of major economic importance. Some of the diseases under intensive study and observation are—

Brucellosis—The cooperative State-Federal brucellosis program was inaugurated in 1934. In 1959, market cattle testing, the collection of blood from animals identified with a standard backtag, was officially adopted as a program procedure. At present, more than 25 percent of the Nation's counties have achieved certified brucellosis-free status. More than 90 percent of the

counties have attained or surpassed modified certified area status.

Tuberculosis—The bovine tuberculosis eradication program started in 1917 and for fiscal year 1966 the infection was so reduced that the rate of reactors was 0.07 percent.

Screw-worms—Native fertile screw-worm populations continue to exist in Mexico. To prevent their entry into the freed areas of the United States, a sterile fly barrier zone has been established along the United States-Mexico border from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific Ocean. This barrier zone is 2,000 miles long and extends from 300 to 500 miles into Mexico. An average of approximately 120 million sexually sterile flies are released in this barrier zone each week. However, because of the quantities of fertile screw-worm flies in Mexico and the capabilities of long distance migration of the screw-worm fly, sporadic outbreaks continue to occur in the United States. When an outbreak occurs immediate control measures are undertaken to promptly eliminate it. Although these sporadic outbreaks continue to occur, the barrier zone is successful.

Hog Cholera—Under legislation passed by Congress in 1961, a State-Federal program was undertaken in 1962 to eradicate hog cohlera. Through reduction of incidence, elimination of outbreaks, and protection against reinfection, present goals call for practical eradication by 1969 and a hog cholera-free Nation by 1972.

Salmonellosis—*SALMONELLA* contamination of commercially prepared feed for livestock and poultry was first recognized in 1954 as a potential disease hazard in the United States. In 1967, a voluntary cooperative *Salmonella* control program with the rendering industry was initiated.

Avian Mycoplasmosis—The causitive agent of chronic respiratory disease of chickens and infectious sinusitis of turkeys was identified in 1960 as *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* after the agent had been studied for 24 years. In 1961 and 1962, pilot control programs were begun in broiler chicken and turkey flocks. In 1967, pilot eradication programs for primary breeder flocks were extended to New York, Georgia, and California.

Equine Piroplasmosis—The disease was first reported in the United States in 1961. In 1962, conclusive evidence established that the tropical horse tick, *Dermacentor nitens,* transmits *Babesia caballi* infection. An active vector control program in Florida is designed to identify infected animals, reduce vector pressures, and release infected animals after chemotherapeutic treatment. The complement fixation test, a practical laboratory aid to diagnosis, has recently

been developed for this disease.

Wholesomeness and cleanliness of meat and poultry products—Red-meat inspection began in the United States in 1891 in order to gain acceptance for American meats in foreign markets. The inspection of live poultry began in 1926 in New York City. The first Federal inspection of eviscerated poultry began in 1927 at the request of one of the soup-manufacturing companies that wanted to ship its products to Canada. Since then, Department of Agriculture veterinarians have guided and developed an inspection program that is accepted throughout the United States and in every country in the world. Thus, the American farmer is assured of a continuing market for his livestock and poultry, and the consumer is assured of wholesomeness, cleanliness, and freedom from disease of meat and poultry products prepared under Federal supervision.

A carcass is being examined by a veterinary meat inspector to assure its wholesomeness. N–43643

THE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Department of Agriculture has a constant need for young graduates in veterinary medicine. Veterinary medical officer positions must be filled in order to combat outbreaks and potential outbreaks of animal disease, to conduct research for the control and eradication of diseases, and to continue the vital job of protecting the Nation's food supply.

The Department offers a wide choice of branches of veterinary science in which to pursue a career. Veterinarians are employed in Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and Consumer and Marketing Service (C&MS).

MEAT INSPECTION—C&MS

This activity employs the largest number of veterinarians. Its major task is to assure the wholesomeness, cleanliness, and freedom from disease of meat and meat food prepared under Federal supervision. Veterinarians in the meat inspection program examine approximately 85 percent of all animals slaughtered commercially for food in the United States and this figure is increasing. Inspectors are employed in all establishments that prepare meat or meat food products for sale in interstate or foreign commerce. All animals are inspected before slaughter, and those that are unfit are condemned. At the time of slaughter, an examination is made of every carcass and its viscera; only meat from healthy animals, produced under sanitary conditions, can be used for food. Unfit meat is destroyed under the supervision of a veterinary medical officer. Meat food products also are inspected during preparation to insure sanitary handling, destruction of unfit products, enforce-

ment of measures for informative labeling, and freedom from adulteration. The meat inspection activities, which are of tremendous importance to the health of the Nation, have been widely acclaimed for their effectiveness in safeguarding consumers against unwholesome meat and meat food products.

The passing of the Wholesome Meat Act in 1967 brought even more protection to the consumer. This act requires that meat and meat food products not inspected by the Federal Government meet Federal standards. Officials of the Federal meat inspection program work closely with State officials in the implementation of this act. The passage of this act offers increased opportunities for veterinarians in the meat inspection program.

POULTRY INSPECTION—C&MS

More than 550 veterinarians are employed in the poultry inspection program. Located in poultry processing plants throughout the country, they supervise the ante-mortem, post-mortem, and sanitation inspection that assures the wholesomeness of over 86 percent of all poultry sold off farms. This accounts for some 11 billion pounds annually. Plants preparing convenience foods such as frozen pies, dinners, and other ready-to-eat products are also under the program. The veterinary poultry inspector has the opportunity to make broad application of his professional knowledge in assuring that the Nation's supply of poultry and poultry products is derived from healthy poultry, processed under sanitary conditions, free of any adulterating substances, and truthfully labeled.

ANIMAL HEALTH—ARS

The Animal Health Division believes the best economic approach to livestock or poultry diseases is to eradicate them. Preventing the introduction of foreign animal diseases and eradicating those domestic diseases that are of major economic significance eliminate the need for a continuous control program and the annual costs associated with it. Through modern methods and procedures, and close cooperation with the States and livestock and poultry industries, the Division—

- Conducts nationwide State-Federal cooperative programs for control and eradication of animal diseases.
- Suppresses the spread of disease through interstate and international movement of livestock.
- Maintains an awareness of the overall disease situation, nationally and internationally, and the capability for dealing with foreign animal diseases.
- Administers laws to insure humane treatment of transported livestock and certain laboratory animals. Also administers the Laboratory Animal Welfare Act of 1966. This law was passed to protect pet owners from theft of pet animals, and to assure that dogs, cats, and other laboratory animals receive uniformly humane care and treatment from animal dealers and research personnel.
- Carries out activities relating to the

collection and dissemination of disease morbidity and mortality information.

To maintain its level of excellence and to provide continuing education for veterinarians on its rolls, the Animal Health Division provides numerous training programs. Graduate education as well as Division sponsored courses are available. Some of the advanced courses Division veterinarians find essential in their work include veterinary pathology, bacteriology, microbiology, fluorescent antibody microscopy, immunology, biostatistics, veterinary hygiene, vital statistics, bacterial identification, parasitology, epidemiology, and veterinary science research.

VETERINARY BIOLOGICS—ARS

More than 1,200 licenses authorize the production of 239 different kinds of veterinary biologics that are used for the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of animals against approximately 60 diseases. The responsibility for licensing and inspecting the production of these veterinary biologics and testing them is that of the Veterinary Biologics Division. Its work assures the users of these products of effective, safe, pure, and properly labeled biologics.

The Veterinary Biologics Division provides numerous training opportunities. Programs exist for both graduate education and ARS sponsored courses.

ANIMAL DISEASE AND PARASITE RESEARCH—ARS

This Division administers a national program of fundamental and applied research on diseases and parasites that affect domestic animals, fur-bearing animals raised in captivity, and poultry, to determine mode transmission of infectious diseases and harmful parasites; and to develop improved diagnostic, vaccinal, and other methods for their prevention, eradication or control. The Division is organized into four major laboratories and a number of field laboratories.

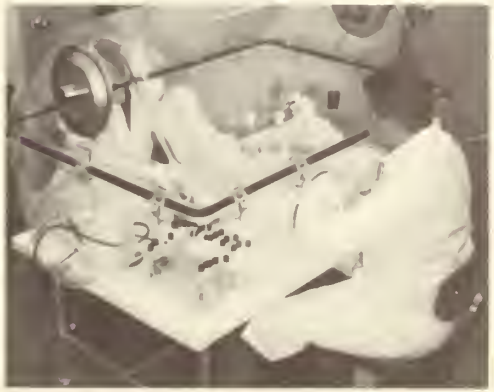
The *Plum Island Animal Disease Laboratory*, occupying an island off the eastern end of the north fork of Long Island, N.Y., specializes in research to develop measures and techniques for the diagnosis, prevention, control, and eradication of highly communicable foreign animal diseases of potential danger to this country. The *National Animal Disease Laboratory* at Ames, Iowa, is a center for research to develop methods for prevention, control, and eradication of highly communicable domestic animal diseases.

The *Beltsville Parasitological Laboratory* at Beltsville, Md., conducts research on internal and external parasites of animals.

The *Southwestern Veterinary Toxicology and Livestock Insects Research Laboratory* at College Station, Tex., performs research on the toxicological and pathological effects on livestock of chemicals used in control of livestock and plant pests.

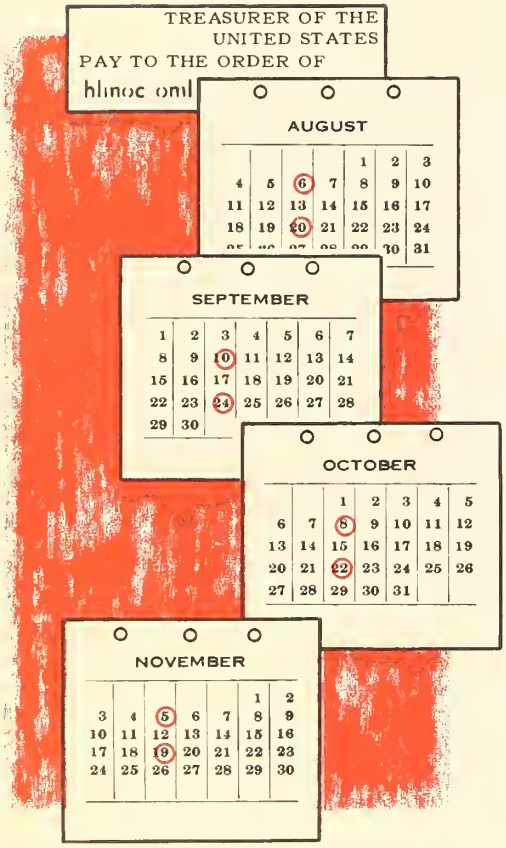
Veterinary medical officer supervises dipping for sheep scabies. BN–12341–X

Veterinary poultry inspectors supervise post mortem inspection of carcasses and viscera. N–56735



Handling pathogenic organisms under safe and sterile conditions. BN–33063

These animals are being driven out of an air-lock room at the Plum Island Animal Disease Laboratory, just one of several steps taken to prevent the spread of contaminated air or materials to outer areas. N–19047



QUALIFICATIONS AND ADVANCEMENT

Veterinary medical officer positions in the Department of Agriculture are in the competitive civil service. They are classified into grades of the general schedule (GS) according to difficulty and responsibility.

To qualify for appointment the applicant must have a degree from a recognized veterinary college or university. A newly graduated doctor of veterinary medicine who was a superior student may enter the Federal Service at the GS–11 level. Other new graduates enter at GS–9, with opportunity for promotion to GS–11 upon satisfactory completion of 6 months of service and training. Veterinarians with 1 year of experience are appointed at grade GS–11. Positions requiring research experience or specialized knowledge are filled at higher grade levels depending primarily on qualifications of the applicants.

The GS–9 grade is the lowest operating level for veterinarians in the Department of Agriculture. You can readily understand, therefore, that a veterinarian appointed to that grade would be just starting on his career. Opportunities for advancement are quite favorable. Naturally, your promotion to higher grades will depend primarily on your performance. The opportunities exist; it is up to you to take advantage of them. The door to advancement will be open to you if you demonstrate progressive attitude, productivity, initiative, and leadership. This is a challenge. You know whether you are equal to it. In planning your career, think about this opportunity and the desirability of becoming associated with the Department of Agriculture.

Employees receive within-grade salary increases at regular intervals.

Such promotions are given each year for the first three steps of the grade, each 2 years for the next three steps, and one each 3 years for the remaining steps.

HOURS OF DUTY

The regular workweek in the Federal civil service is 40 hours. Employees work 8 hours a day, from Monday through Friday. If you are required to work extra hours, you receive additional pay or compensatory time off.

Employees observe eight national holidays each year: New Year's Day, Washington's Birthday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veterans' Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas. When any of these falls on Saturday or Sunday, the holiday is observed the preceding Friday or the following Monday. New legislation designates Columbus Day as a national holiday and it will be observed beginning in 1971.

CAREER BENEFITS

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

The Department of Agriculture encourages training and any type of development that will assist an employee in achieving his maximum potential. Training is based on individual employee needs. USDA affords a variety of training opportunities. These consist of within-service training, training in other agencies, and training in colleges and universities. The training may be full time, part time, on or off duty, day or evening, or a combination of these. The Government usually pays the costs of training.

ANNUAL LEAVE

Each year, employees earn annual leave, for vacation and other purposes, as follows: Those with less than 3 years of service, 13 days; those with 3 to 15 years, 20 days; those with 15 years or more, 26 days.

Annual leave may be taken in units of 1 or more hours. Leave not used in

a year may be accumulated up to a limit of 30 days.

SICK LEAVE

Each year, you will earn 13 days of sick leave, for use in case of serious illness and for medical or dental appointments. Unused sick leave accumulates without limit and provides employees with financial protection for periods of prolonged illness.

MILITARY LEAVE

If you are a member of the National Guard or of the Reserves of the Army, Air Force, Navy, or Marines you are entitled to military leave for training, instruction, and field exercises. A maximum of 15 calendar days is allowed each year with full pay and without charge against annual leave.

MEDICAL AND COMPENSATION BENEFITS

A service-connected illness or injury entitles an employee to medical attention, hospitalization, and compensation for loss of wages. These benefits are provided without cost to the employee and are especially important to veterinarians because their duties sometimes involve hazards.

GROUP HEALTH INSURANCE

Several group health insurance plans are available to all permanent, full-time veterinarians at low cost. The plans offer coverage for hospital and surgical benefits, related in-hospital benefits, and the payment for outpatient and clinical care and treatment, prescribed drugs, medicines, and prosthetic devices. The cost of insurance depends on the type of plan selected and the coverage desired. The Federal Government shares the cost of the group health insurance with each veterinarian electing to participate in this program. The remainder of the cost is collected through payroll deductions.

GROUP LIFE INSURANCE

Life insurance is available at low cost to full-time employees. No medical examination is required. The insurance is not mandatory, but most employees take advantage of it to help provide economic security for their families.

The amount of insurance is based on the individual's basic salary. Minimum coverage is $10,000 for employees whose annual salary is $8,000 or less. For the employee whose annual rate is $8,001 and above, the amount of annual rate is rounded to the next higher $1,000 plus $2,000, with an overall maximum coverage of $32,000. For example, an employee earning $8,592, is covered by $11,000 of insurance.

The cost of the insurance to the employee is approximately 27½ cents per $1,000 of insurance which is deducted, biweekly, from his pay. The Federal Government contributes approximately half as much as do employees. Most employees have the option of purchasing $10,000 additional insurance at a slightly higher cost.

RETIREMENT SYSTEM

The Federal civil service retirement system is sound and attractive. It is one of the outstanding advantages of Federal employment. You should consider it seriously when you plan a career in veterinary medicine.

Some of the highlights of the retirement system are summarized below:

1. You may retire on full annuity at any time after age 55, provided you have had 30 or more years of service.

2. You may retire on full annuity at any time after the age of 60, provided you have had 20 or more years of service.

3. You may retire on full annuity at any time after the age of 62 provided you have had 5 or more years of service.

4. You may retire on an annuity as described below) regardless of age after 5 or more years of service, if you become totally disabled for useful and efficient service.

5. You must retire at age 70 after 15 or more years of service, and you will receive full annuity.

6. If you leave Federal Government service after 5 years and before becoming eligible for retirement, you will be entitled to an annuity when you reach the age of 62. You may elect to receive a refund of your retirement deductions and accrued interest in lieu of a future annuity. If you leave before completing

5 years of service, you will receive the refund, since you will not be eligible for a future annuity.

7. The amount of annuity, except for disability retirement, is computed by taking the following percentages of the average salary for the 5 highest consecutive years, multiplying the results by the number of years of service indicated below, and adding the totals so obtained:

1½ percent of average salary multiplied by first 5 years of service.

1¾ percent of average salary multiplied by next 5 years of service.

2 percent of average salary multiplied by all remaining years of service.

In no case may the annuity exceed 80 percent of the average salary. Table 1 shows the amount of annuity that you can receive under this formula; the amount depends on your average salary and number of years of service. In case of disability retirement, the minimum annuity payable is the lesser of the following: 40 percent of average salary for the 5 highest consecutive years or the amount of annuity (as computed under the general formula given above) that the employee would have received at age 60 had he remained in the service until then. An annuity larger than the minimum for disability retirement is payable if it has been actually earned by the employee in accordance with the general formula given.

8. If an employee dies after he has completed 5 years of service or more, his widow and/or dependent children are eligible for annuity benefits. If he leaves no widow or dependent children, the refund consisting of his retirement deductions and accrued interest is paid to his designated beneficiary.

9. Employees and the Government contribute jointly to the retirement fund. Your share would be 6½ percent of your salary; this amount is automatically deducted from each pay.

This information gives you an idea of the advantages of the Federal retirement system. The deductions are an excellent investment; you may understand this better by comparing the cost of annuities of standard insurance firms. This retirement plan assures you of a regular income for yourself and your family during the later years of life. Think carefully about it when you plan your career as a veterinarian.

TABLE 1.—Amounts of annuity receivable (at age 55 or over) by salary and years of service

Highest 5-year average salary	Amount of annuity receivable after specified years of service		
	30	35	42
$12,000	$6,756	$7,956	$9,636
$14,000	7,872	9,276	11,232
$16,000	9,000	10,596	12,840
$18,000	10,128	11,928	14,400
$20,000	11,244	13,248	15,996
$22,000	12,372	14,568	17,592

SUMMER EMPLOYMENT FOR STUDENTS

Each summer the Department of Agriculture employs a substantial number of students who have completed the junior year at veterinary college. The students are paid a grade GS–7 salary. Students are given the opportunity of assisting experienced veterinarians and obtaining practical experience and first-hand information.

Before the end of the school year, a representative of the Department will furnish information to junior students about the activities and locations available. Take one of these summer jobs if the opportunity is presented. Learn for yourself that Government service offers attractive careers in veterinary medicine and is a challenge to your technical training and ability.

WHERE TO GET ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

As a part of its recruitment program for veterinarians, the Department of Agriculture maintains a network of college recruitment representatives—who themselves are veterinarians—located at or near all of the veterinary colleges in the United States. These recruitment representatives meet with the senior and junior classes in veterinary medicine each year to explain in detail to members of the graduating classes the opportunities for rewarding careers in the U.S. Department of Agriculture and to furnish complete information to members of the junior classes on the program for their summer employment as veterinary trainees.

For information on *Meat Inspection* and *Poultry Inspection*, write to:

Personnel Division
Consumer and Marketing Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
536 South Clark Street
Chicago, Ill. 60605

For information on *Animal Disease and Parasite Research, Animal Health,* and *Veterinary Biologics,* write to:

Personnel Division
Agricultural Research Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Federal Center Building
Hyattsville, Md. 20782

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